In the Claims

1.   (Original)   A method for automated management of business services comprising:

establishing an organizational database maintaining at least one business function description comprising a business function indicator and a plurality of business function requirements;

accessing a service registry using the business function indicator to identify a network address for each of a plurality of service providers each having a service indicator matching the business function indicator;

for each of the identified service providers:

communicating with the service provider to determine feature interfaces for interacting with the service provider;

accessing at least one of the feature interfaces of the service provider to determine a plurality of service descriptors describing a service provided by the service provider; and

determining whether the service provider is satisfactory based on if the service descriptors satisfy at least a portion of the business function requirements; and

ranking each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors from each of the satisfactory service providers.

2.   (Original)   The method of Claim 1, further comprising, for each of the identified service providers, if the service provider is satisfactory, negotiating variable service descriptors using a second one of the feature interfaces for the service provider, wherein ranking each of the satisfactory service providers further comprises ranking each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors and the variable service descriptors.

3.   (Original)   The method of Claim 2, further comprising accessing a third feature interface of the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers to authorize performance of the service.

4.   (Original) The method of Claim 2, wherein negotiating the variable service descriptors comprises:

determining a plurality of deal parameters identified within the business function requirements;

accessing a knowledge base to identify at least one negotiation threshold; and

iteratively accessing the second feature interface to negotiate the variable service descriptors, and for each iteration, modifying at least one of the deal parameters, communicating the deal parameters to the second feature interface, receiving a current version of the variable service descriptors, and comparing at least one of the variable service descriptors against the negotiation threshold.

5.   (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising generating a notification identifying at least the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers.

6.   (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

identifying a current service provider associated with the business function description;

comparing the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers against the current service provider; and

if the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers ranks higher than the current service provider, generating a notification identifying the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers.

7.   (Original) The method of Claim 1, further comprising providing organizational information to a selected one of the satisfactory service providers to enable performance of the service.

8.   (Original) The method of Claim 7, wherein the service comprises payroll management, and wherein the organizational information details employee data, payment data, and banking information.

9.   (Original)   A system for automated management of business services comprising:

a plurality of service providers each having a network address, a plurality of features providing access to a service, and a plurality of service descriptors describing the service;

a service registry maintaining, for each of the service providers, the network address and one or more published ones of the service descriptors; and

an organization agent coupled to the service providers and the service registry using a communication network, the organization agent operable to:

establish an organizational database maintaining at least one business function description comprising a business function indicator and a plurality of business function requirements;

access the service registry using the business function indicator to identify the network address for each of a plurality of the service providers, each of the identified service providers having one of the published service descriptors matching the business function indicator;

for each of the identified service providers:

communicate with the service provider to determine the features for interacting with the service provider;

access at least one of the features of the service provider to determine the service descriptors describing the service provided by the service provider; and

determine whether the service provider is satisfactory based on if the service descriptors satisfy at least a portion of the business function requirements; and

rank each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors from each of the satisfactory service providers.

10.   (Original) The system of Claim 9, wherein the organization agent is further operable, for each of the identified service providers, if the service provider is satisfactory, to negotiate variable service descriptors using a second one of the features of the service provider, and wherein the organization agent is further operable to rank each of the satisfactory service providers further by ranking each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors and the variable service descriptors.

11.   (Original) The system of Claim 10, wherein the organization agent is further operable to access a third one of the features of the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers to authorize performance of the service.

12.   (Original) The system of Claim 10, wherein the organization agent is further operable to negotiate the variable service descriptors by:

determining a plurality of deal parameters identified within the business function requirements;

accessing a knowledge base to identify at least one negotiation threshold; and

iteratively accessing the second feature to negotiate the variable service descriptors, and for each iteration, modifying at least one of the deal parameters, communicating the deal parameters to the second feature, receiving a current version of the variable service descriptors, and comparing at least one of the variable service descriptors against the negotiation threshold.

13.   (Original) The system of Claim 9, wherein the organization agent is further operable to generate a notification identifying at least the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers.

14.   (Original) The system of Claim 9, wherein the organization agent is further operable to:

identify a current service provider associated with the business function description;

compare the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers against the current service provider; and

if the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers ranks higher than the current service provider, generate a notification identifying the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers.

15.   (Original) The system of Claim 9, wherein the organization agent is further operable to provide organizational information to a selected one of the satisfactory service providers to enable performance of the service.

16.   (Original) The system of Claim 15, wherein the service comprises payroll management, and wherein the organizational information details employee data, payment data, and banking information.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~Logic~~ A computer readable medium encoded with logic for automated management of business services, the logic ~~encoded in a computer readable medium and~~ operable when executed to perform the steps of:

establishing an organizational database maintaining at least one business function description comprising a business function indicator and a plurality of business function requirements;

accessing a service registry using the business function indicator to identify a network address for each of a plurality of service providers each having a service indicator matching the business function indicator;

for each of the identified service providers:

communicating with the service provider to determine feature interfaces for interacting with the service provider;

accessing at least one of the feature interfaces of the service provider to determine a plurality of service descriptors describing a service provided by the service provider; and

determining whether the service provider is satisfactory based on if the service descriptors satisfy at least a portion of the business function requirements; and

ranking each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors from each of the satisfactory service providers.

18. (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ computer readable medium of Claim 17, the logic further operable when executed, for each of the identified service providers, if the service provider is satisfactory, to negotiate variable service descriptors using a second one of the feature interfaces for the service provider, wherein ranking each of the satisfactory service providers further comprises ranking each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors and the variable service descriptors.

19. (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ computer readable medium of Claim 18, the logic further operable when executed to perform the step of accessing a third feature interface of the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers to authorize performance of the service.

20. (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ computer readable medium of Claim 18, the logic further operable when executed to negotiate the variable service descriptors by:

determining a plurality of deal parameters identified within the business function requirements;

accessing a knowledge base to identify at least one negotiation threshold; and

iteratively accessing the second feature interface to negotiate the variable service descriptors, and for each iteration, modifying at least one of the deal parameters, communicating the deal parameters to the second feature interface, receiving a current version of the variable service descriptors, and comparing at least one of the variable service descriptors against the negotiation threshold.

21. (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ computer readable medium of Claim 17, the logic further operable when executed to perform the step of generating a notification identifying at least the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers.

22. (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ computer readable medium of Claim 17, the logic further operable when executed to perform the steps of:

identifying a current service provider associated with the business function description;

comparing the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers against the current service provider; and

if the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers ranks higher than the current service provider, generating a notification identifying the highest ranking one of the satisfactory service providers.

23. (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ computer readable medium of Claim 17, the logic further operable when executed to perform the step of providing organizational information to a selected one of the satisfactory service providers to enable performance of the service.

24.   (Currently Amended) The ~~logic~~ <u>computer readable medium</u> of Claim 23, wherein the service comprises payroll management, and wherein the organizational information details employee data, payment data, and banking information.

25.   (Original)   A system for automated management of business services comprising:

means for establishing an organizational database maintaining at least one business function description comprising a business function indicator and a plurality of business function requirements;

means for accessing a service registry using the business function indicator to identify a network address for each of a plurality of service providers each having a service indicator matching the business function indicator;

means for, for each of the identified service providers:

communicating with the service provider to determine feature interfaces for interacting with the service provider;

accessing at least one of the feature interfaces of the service provider to determine a plurality of service descriptors describing a service provided by the service provider; and

determining whether the service provider is satisfactory based on if the service descriptors satisfy at least a portion of the business function requirements; and

means for ranking each of the satisfactory service providers based on the service descriptors from each of the satisfactory service providers.